



University  
Centre  
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

# HIGHER EDUCATION

# ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to clearly state Bridgwater and Taunton College's approach to, and methods of, providing additional learning support for its higher education students at University Centre Somerset.

## **2 Policy Statement**

- 2.1 This policy supports the Aims and Objectives as outlined in the College Strategic Plan. The outcome of the Policy will enable learners to be successful and achieve to their full potential, thus providing all learners with a positive College experience.
- 2.2 This procedure applies to all programmes of level 4 or above including those that are validated externally with HEI partners, which receive Office for Students (OfS) funding.

## **3 Scope**

- 3.1 This information is relevant to all students and staff (academic and support) involved in the delivery or support of higher education programmes.

## **4 Purpose of Additional Learning Support**

- 4.1 The purpose of Additional Learning Support (ALS) at Bridgwater and Taunton College is to provide services and/or facilitate access to services for students who require additional support to underpin their ability to learn.
- 4.2 The HEI partner or awarding body retain the responsibility for the quality and standards of the programme and final award. Where they have over-arching policies in place relating to the provision of additional learning support for students affiliated with them then their policies shall apply. Their policies and procedures may differ but this policy seeks to give an overview of how these approaches are managed by Bridgwater and Taunton College/University Centre Somerset.

## **5 Overarching Principles**

- 5.1 The overarching principles of additional learning support for higher education at Bridgwater and Taunton College/University Centre Somerset, describe the values and characteristics expected as a result of the implementation of this policy:
- All students are treated fairly, equitably and with respect
  - Students, as key stakeholders, are involved in the design and review of this policy

## **6 Related Information**

- 6.1 This procedure should be read with reference to:
- HEI partnership agreements and specific student representation policies and procedures
  - Bridgwater and Taunton College's Equality and Diversity Policy
  - FE Additional Learning Support Policy
  - HE Student Support Funding Policy

## 7 Reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

- 7.1 The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) expects that 'From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education'. This policy has been written to reflect the expectation for quality, core and common practices and guiding principles given in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published by the QAA, with particular reference to the Advice and Guidance contained within the publication: Enabling Student Achievement <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/enabling-student-achievement>

## 8 Roles and Responsibilities

### 8.1 The College

The College is responsible for ensuring there are clear procedures and opportunities available to enable HE students to be informed about and engage with additional learning support as needed. The College is obliged to do this as stated within its HEI partnership agreements. The College, as a Higher Education Provider, takes account of the UK Quality Code published by the QAA as a key a reference point for the quality management and enhancement of its higher education provision which is reviewed periodically by the QAA.

The College is also responsible for meeting the ongoing conditions of registration of the Office for Students. This includes:

- Condition B1: 'The provider must deliver well designed courses that provide a high quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed'.
- Condition B2: 'The provider must support all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education'.

### 8.2 Students

Higher Education students are responsible for being pro-active and timely in responding to the requests from ALS and applying for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and the Technical Needs Assessment (TNA) with ALS support and guidance and providing the ALS team with the resulting reports.

Under normal conditions at least 4 weeks' notice is required when requesting exam concessions to be put in place.

### 8.3 Principalship

The Principalship holds overall responsibility at the College to ensure there are systems and structures in place that are fit for purpose for additional learning support.

### 8.4 Additional Learning Support Team

Additional learning support will support the learner in accessing the DSA, a diagnostic assessment and the TNA.

On receipt of the DSA2 the coordinators will contact the student to inform them of receipt of the DSA2 support needs to be agreed within 14 days of receipt of DSA2.

ALS will store all supplied diagnostic reports, DSA2s and TNAs as evidence for exam concessions and support and exam concessions will be entered onto ProMonitor/ProSolution.

For those students who request their support to be supplied by Bridgwater and Taunton College, and have a DSA and TNA:

- The Additional Learning Support Team are responsible for supplying the correct support as defined by the TNA, that it is reviewed and tracked correctly, to inform Course Leaders /Tutors of the support via ProMonitor and to invoice SFE. ALS will inform the Tutors of any changes of support arrangements via ProMonitor
- All sessions will be agreed and booked in advance with the allocated support worker and student.

For those students who wish to access support elsewhere:

- It is not the responsibility of Bridgwater and Taunton College to ensure that the support is correct
- Additional learning support will advise the Lecturing teams on strategies and techniques to support learners in the classroom
- Additional learning support will ensure staff qualifications and professional membership are kept up to date in line with the DSA Quality Assurance Process
- Additional learning support will ensure all support staff are qualified as defined by the DSA Quality Assurance Process

### **8.5 Heads of Department**

Heads of Department are responsible for the programmes of study and students within their Area, or for the services that support them and therefore are responsible for ensuring that students have opportunities to access additional learning support and that their teams are informed of the processes governing this.

### **8.6 Curriculum Managers**

Curriculum Managers provide a curriculum based lead for each section of the College's activity based on subject disciplines. With regard to HE additional learning support the Curriculum Managers are responsible for ensuring all reasonable adjustments are implemented.

### **8.7 Course Leaders/Tutors**

Course Leaders (who are normally also Tutors) manage individual programmes of study. They may have different areas of responsibility based on partnership arrangements with universities but these responsibilities will be broadly similar. Key areas of responsibility will include oversight of all students enrolled on their higher education programme(s) and therefore the knowledge of each of their individual learning plans, progress towards achievement, any additional support that is in place and the exam concessions that have been agreed. Course Leaders should be knowledgeable of additional learning support systems and services and be able to at least sign-post students to services at the College.

Tutors are responsible for:

- Including feedback from ALS to inform student reviews/PDP
- Passing onto ALS any copies of reports received directly from students

- Ensuring that students work with their exam concessions as a normal way of working.

### **8.8 Support Services Managers**

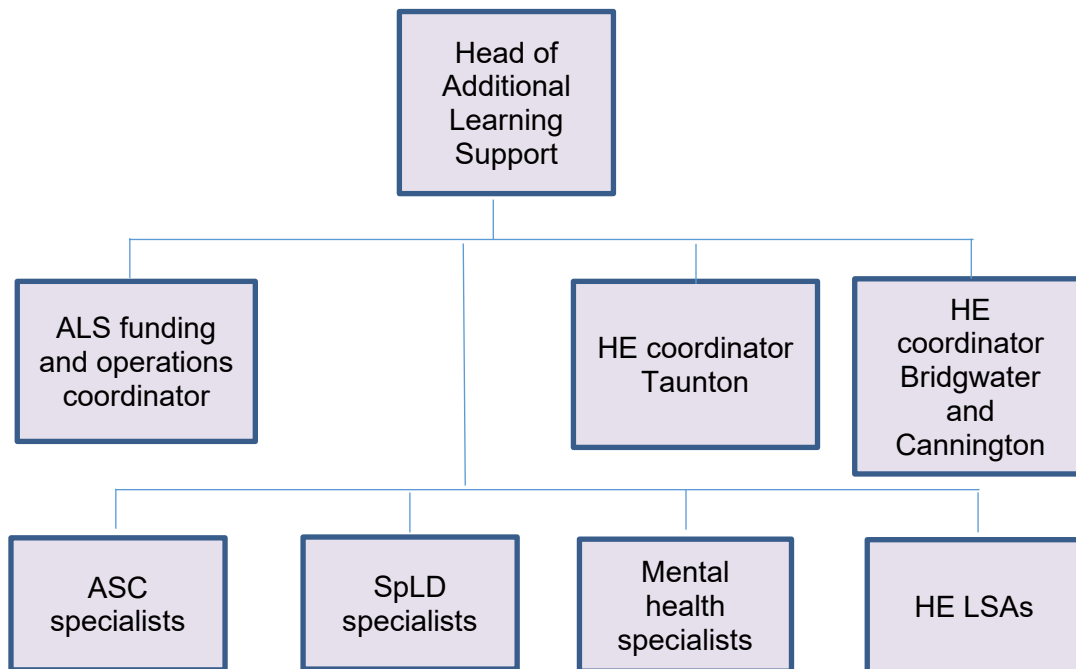
Support service managers with roles in varying services across the College are responsible for having awareness of topics, activities and issues that affect HE students and to understand the wider context in which they reside. This may include being able to effectively signpost students to the correct team that can help with their additional learning needs.

### **8.9 Exams Office**

The Exams office is responsible for ensuring all exam concessions are in place and appropriately staffed as defined on ProSolution.

## 9 Additional Learning Support Structure

### 9.1 Overview



### 9.2 Purpose of Additional Learning Support

The College is committed to developing inclusive learning approaches and to providing additional learning support to secure learning success for all.

### 9.3 The Process of Providing Additional Learning Support

The College will ensure all learners with additional support needs have equal access to the curriculum and are able to work towards meeting their full potential. This will be achieved by supporting the students through the DSA, diagnostic assessment and TNA application process and providing the specified support, if requested, that is defined in the TNA or diagnostic report.

#### 9.3.1 Exam Concessions

The College will implement exam concessions as defined in the TNA or diagnostic report that is supplied by the student and the evidence will be held by the ALS team and recorded on ProMonitor/ProSolution.

The ALS Team / Exams Team will liaise closely with the Course Leader for Trainee Nurse Associate and Nursing Degree qualifications when considering exam concessions. This is in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and UWE who validate these programmes. The NMC have very specific requirements in relation to what is acceptable and what is not allowable in terms of exam/assessment concessions for students on these programmes.

### 9.4 Communication of Opportunities for Additional Learning Support

#### 9.4.1 Pre-Enrolment

All students receive a link to the DSA website and a contact e-mail for learning support at the College in their offer letter.

Any student who is either already being supported by the College, or who declares an ALS support need on their application form, is contacted by the College and assisted in the DSA application process.

#### 9.4.2 **Induction**

During the induction process all students are informed of the DSA process and who to contact for assistance.

#### 9.4.3 **On-Programme**

Students can either be referred by their Tutors or self-refer to ALS to be screened for possible SpLD. The SpLD team will then assist in the DSA application process.

#### 9.5 **Feedback about the Additional Learning Support Services and Processes**

The HE student survey includes questions on learning support. Questionnaires are placed in the HE support rooms which can be completed anonymously.

Feedback from the students is recorded at every support session and informs the next support session. In addition an end of year survey is undertaken which as well as the online HE student survey and the anonymous feedback questionnaires will inform planning for the subsequent year.

#### 9.6 **Annual Monitoring, Review and Self-Evaluation**

At the end of each academic year there is a period of review and self-evaluation that takes place. These are formal documented processes through which programmes and the college management of HE is reflected upon, improvements identified and good practice noted for sharing during the next academic year. The self-evaluation informs the future strategic direction of the college and actions required at an operational level to achieve it.

### 10 **Additional Learning Support Services**

#### 10.1 **On-going professional development**

SpLD specialists keep up to date by regular PATOSS meetings, annual JCQ update training, weekly agenda item on SpLD meetings and by keeping their approved practising certificate (PATOSS) and AMBDA (Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association) up to date.

**Autism Spectrum Condition** (ASC) specialists attend regular regional forums to discuss emerging issues. The ASC facilitator takes the lead in the regional transitions of ASC into FE, HE and gaining employment.

The Head of ALS is kept informed of changes to the DSA via links with partner Universities and regional Colleges. There is a comprehensive personal development programme within College to which every member of staff is expected to participate. There is an annual staff conference which all are expected to attend. Further updates and training are provided in the HE Course Leaders meetings.

#### 10.2 **Services available to students**

On receipt of the TNA by Bridgwater and Taunton College the HE ALS coordinators will refer the student to the most appropriate support including:



- Specialist support in dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
- Note taking
- Study skills
- ASC support
- Library support assistant
- Proof reading
- Examination support assistant
- Mental health mentor
- Mentoring
- Counselling
- Assistive technology
- Hearing loop

## 11 Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

11.1 Students can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) if they have a:

- Disability or long-term health condition
- Mental health condition
- Specific learning difficulty like dyslexia or dyspraxia

They must also:

- Be an undergraduate or postgraduate student (including Open University or distance learning)
- Have a condition that affects their ability to study
- Qualify for student finance from Student Finance England
- Be studying on a course that lasts at least a year

For Further information - <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview>

## 12 External Review

12.1 The College is subject to external review on a periodic basis. The primary mechanism for this is through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which is the Designated Quality Body appointed by the Office for Students/Department for Education to review quality in higher education in the UK. The QAA expects students to be involved throughout their review process. Other review mechanisms the College is subject to are generally on a university specific basis with periodic reviews of provision or the College as a partner, or from other regulatory bodies specific to areas of the College's higher education provision. Apprenticeship provision at level 4 or above is subject to inspection by OFSTED, as is the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and Cert Ed. Any such reviews would include reference to:

- Senate meetings
- Self-Evaluation reports
- Validation documentation - handbooks
- HE Course Leader meetings
- ALS HE monitoring meetings

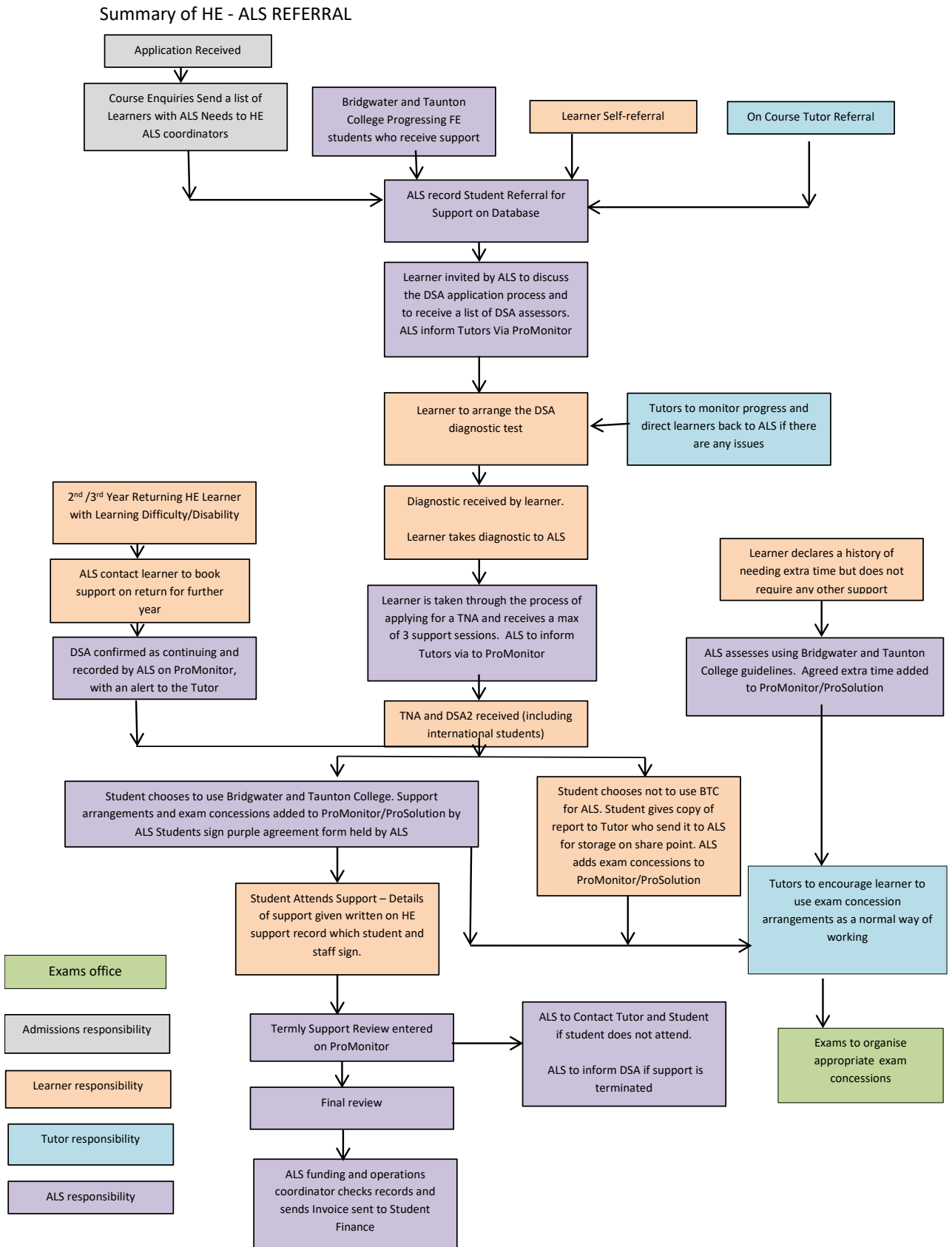
## 13 Review of Policy

13.1 This policy has been led by the Head of Additional Learning Support and developed in consultation with students (via student representatives), the HE Team and college

staff including senior managers. In writing this policy partner university policies, procedures and protocols have been referred to thus ensuring that this policy aligns with and/or complements their processes and expectations. The College's Senate is responsible for monitoring policies and activities relating to higher education. The Policy Steering Group is responsible for the review of the content of the document and the College's Senior Management Team is responsible for approval.

# Appendix 1

# Summary of HE – ALS Referral



## Appendix 2

## HE Exam Concession Arrangements

